# THE RSYLUM

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#### A. J. A. SYMONS 1900-1941

"...behind all the paraphernalia of bibliography, behind the bookshops, auctions, exhibitions, catalogues, collections and research which define the collector's efforts, is the single fact of the love of books."



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## The Asylum

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Front Cover: Part of the last page of a 1796 letter written by Simon Desjardins about Castorland, published in this issue by John W. Adams.



## President's Greetings

Under the editorship of David Yoon, *The Asylum* is gathering momentum. In addition to the regular articles, we have some special projects in the works, the first of which appears here: Len Augsburger's first cut at the hundred greatest works in United States numismatics.

I am hoping that Len's project will evoke fervent member participation. Let me proffer the same hopes for two upcoming projects, our Club History and our Biography of George Kolbe. Both of these will be enriched by your contributions.

Wayne Homren is finalizing a contract to modernize our website. This will be an expensive undertaking but, after 25 years of the status quo, one which will move our public-facing portal a giant step forward. We expect to have this project completed by mid-February.

Many of you are members of Early American Coppers and will have seen, in the current issue of *Penny-Wise*, an excellent article by Bill Eckberg and Mike Packard. Bill and Mike are experts on half cents; their article was based on a proprietary manuscript lent to them by another member for just this purpose. Many of you bought unique or near-unique items at the Ford Library sales. *The Asylum* warmly invites you to write these items up or, if you doubt your expertise or don't have the time, ask us to find a Bill Eckberg to do the job. Proprietary information cries out to be shared.

John W. Adams

P. Scott Rubin is looking for members' stories about NBS cofounder George Kolbe for an up-coming article for *The Asylum*. Please send them to:

numislit@msn.com

OI

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## A Wall of Medal Records

### D. Wayne Johnson

A writer's most useful resource is his own files. For years I have been remiss in filing clippings, papers, photographs, articles, pamphlets, scribbled notes, all that good stuff. I would let it pile up until I had to move it off my desk. I would place it in one of those "bankers' boxes" used for storage and mark it "TBS" — To Be Sorted. But I never got around to doing that!

To find something, as you might imagine, I had to paw through boxes of this flotsam. Never a pleasant chore, I seldom found what I was looking for (until I was looking for something else!). Then three things happened to change my wrongful ways.

I bought a book "File Don't Pile." Wow, that hit me right between the eyes. I learned some useful pointers from this revealing book.

Second was a fortuitous act of Good Wife Shirley. She brought home from a shopping trip to a new grocery store, Aldi, goods in a small box. This grocery discount store stocks their merchandise in aisles and refrigerators right in the shipping boxes. You are encouraged to take the boxes and pack your purchases in these boxes.

The box she chose was white and marked "orange juice." Six half-gallon containers were shipped in one of these open-top boxes. I noticed it was just the right size for file folders, roughly 8 × 12 and 10 inches deep. Wow again! I found I could put a couple dozen file folders, more or less, in one of these boxes. Nice fit.

So I encouraged Good Wife to bring home all her grocery purchases in these small boxes. All of a sudden, however, they changed, they now come printed in orange color. I get the point: orange juice in orange printed boxes.

This article was originally published in *The MCA Advisory* 10.7(July 2007): 2-5. Reprinted courtesy of the Medal Collectors of America.



By that time, however, I had learned three of these boxes would fit nicely on one of my 26-inch bookshelves. What is better, you could toss a paper or file folder right on top of an open box and it would fall in the box in front of all the other files (provided the folders leaned against the right side of the box). Then later file the single item in the proper file folder or the folder in proper place.

Third, we moved. The new house had an existing office with built-in shelving. A second room adjacent to this became the library. I had books in every room in the house before (books even spilled out into bookcases in the garage). In the new house I could easily fill up the office shelves, the library room plus a couple bookcases of nicer books in the living room — I like "living" with books.

Unfortunately there are still three pallets of books in the basement. An industrial-strength forklift would strain under the weight of those pallets of heavy book boxes.

Anyway, the orange boxes were ideal to replace metal filing cabinets. So I had disposed of nearly all those old metal filing cabinets before moving. I filled more white bankers' boxes for moving.

In the new house I have filled four bookcases with these orange boxes now called "document boxes." Three of these bookcases were the pressed-wood kind that even 26-inch shelves begin to bow under the mass of weighty numismatic tomes.

Thankfully they don't seem to bow with the document boxes, their weight is evenly spread. I bought all new metal shelving for a wall of those heavy numismatic books in the library room.

Next I wanted to make labels for these document boxes. Stationery manufacturer Avery makes a full sheet white label (#5165) that Staples sells. The  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ -inch label would more than cover one end of a document box. The labels are easily printed so I could custom print a label for every box.

I had space in my office for a special bookcase. So I had my handy man build one to accommodate four boxes across. He made this of oak and again, no bowing. It can accommodate seven rows, floor to ceiling.

I put boxes containing photographs on the bottom shelf. They were heavy. Light-weight content boxes, like one labeled "World Mints," went on the top shelf. It contains flyers and literature, obviously, from world mints. It's not very full yet and not very heavy so it goes on the top shelf.

I can still drop papers and file folders in all these boxes. My filing time is cut way down and it is so much fun that piles don't build up as high on my desk anymore. It feels good to get organized and stay organized.

I found most of my files could be divided into little groups from two to twenty file folders by putting related files together in one box.

For longer files — like correspondence (over 200 file folders) or my files on artists (250 folders) — these go in document boxes numbered from "1" up. As soon as they get too tight I can easily make a new box and space them out a little.

In all, now, I have become organized. I file not pile, thank you. I have now filled 100 document boxes and placed these in two double bookcases and two single. Now just about every shelf is filled with open top document boxes.

I have a box for each subject, or each organization, or each magazine I subscribe to. A half dozen contain family genealogical records, household and auto records. But more than eighty boxes are concerned with medal or numismatic topics I often write about.

One is marked "Circle of Friends of the Medallion." Another is for Tiffany and Gorham medals. Two boxes for the Philadelphia Mint, and three boxes for Medallic Art Co. I have information on Live American Artists in three boxes (soon to be four) and two for Dead Medallic

Artists of coins and medals. When one gets too full, I make another with a similar label. Easy to do.

One box is labeled "Carnegie Hero Fund Medal." This contains a variety of material: file folders of correspondence I had with the Carnegie Hero Fund Foundation officers and the suggestions I gave them for creating their Centennial Medal.

The wife and I attended their 2004 Centennial Banquet. We were given all kinds of mementoes. I found I could put all these items in this one document box as well.

So that box contains their newsletters, two sample medals, two Centennial Medals, two centennial books, a tape, and, oh yes, drafts of my article on this medal that ran in the October 2006 issue of *The Numismatist*. All in one box.

I still have some TBS boxes (two of the most difficult to file). So the sorting beat goes on; but no more filing drawers to pull out, and paw through file folders. I can see what's in a box even from across the room. I don't have to recall what file is in what filing cabinet.

Also I can dip in a well-marked box on a shelf to pull out a file, or, take the entire box to my desk. Returning file folder to box or box to shelf is a breeze.

To return a single folder I don't even have to get up. I can roll around in my office chair, I can reach (all but the top two shelves), toss the file folder in the proper document box. It falls down in front of the other folders. No more filing cabinets. No more drawers to pull open.

As an intended benefit I have added one line for the final disposition of each individual box (when I pass on). Some stay with the family — my 3-box map collection goes to my son — some to other family members, some stay with the house, but most are destined to go to a medal museum.

I haven't decided which medal museum yet. I'll put that instruction in my will. But Good Wife — or the executor of my estate — will know exactly the intended recipient of where I want every box to go.

Also, all this organizing activity pinpoints exactly what I need to add to this vast medal document collection.

Would you believe what I am missing most is data on Franklin Mint medals? Yes, I have their catalogs and monthly magazines (filling two boxes).

But guess what is useful that I don't have? Franklin Mint original sales literature! These gave intended information before the medals were issued — their concept and plans for a medal series or single medal. Remember all those flyers you received in the mail? Oh, I wish I had saved mine!

This also highlights that medal data can be found in many forms and formats. I would like access to it all. For possible medal articles now and, for the future, to ultimately place this valuable data information in a museum. If you have any such material you wish to dispose of, let me know. I have a lot of empty orange document boxes.

For any reader who might be inspired to organize their own medal records, I have learned by experience some tips to pass along.

- · Choose box titles that are "umbrella terms" to include related files or records no more than six inches thick per box.
- · Analyze your incoming publications; local coin club notices may be kept with regional club publications until the box grows too full, separate with file folders.
- · Keep related material together. Put "work papers" and notes with latest drafts until the volume grows sufficient to add another box.
- Tip for bringing together "related material:" I have one box labeled "Research Aids" that includes data on sources (libraries, archives, museums) as well as tips on "how to research" and areas of research (city directories, biographical data, death index, internet sites, and such).
- · Some boxes can serve as intermediate staging in the sorting process. For example, I put all news clippings in one box for later sorting in proper subject boxes.
- · Photocopy. A clipping on a medal can logically be placed in two or more files, say, artist, collector topic and subject. Copy and place in all.
- · Keep family and household records and correspondence separate from numismatic records.

Best of all, I now have a Wall of Records for all my files and documents on medals, medal makers, medal series and medal illustrations. Wish I had done this reorganization years ago!

P.S. I drink a lot of orange juice!

## The Story Behind the Castorland Jeton

#### John W. Adams

Over the years, there has been a fair amount written on the so-called Castorland Jeton. Some think it a jeton de presence, some consider it a commemorative medal, and still others think it was an actual circulating coin. Whichever it might be, designed by Benjamin Duvivier, it is a handsome piece that has been struck and re-struck. In addition to being a handsome piece, the Castorland jeton is part of a little-known chapter in American history that is as fascinating as it is poignant.

The framework around the story of Castorland is quite simple: in 1792, nearly a decade after the Peace of Paris, there were huge tracts of land in western New York State available at low prices; on the other side of the Atlantic, the advent of the Terror was causing large numbers of French people to consider emigration.

On August 31, 1792, Pierre Chassanis entered into a contract to purchase 630,000 acres in northwestern New York. In October of that year, he issued a prospectus describing in flowery prose the fertility of the land, the richness of its natural resources, the benevolence of its weather, its ease of access, along with other assorted half-truths and untruths about a location that the authors of the prospectus had probably never seen. In one example, the spring is described as "not long" and autumn as "beautiful," whereas the salient facts are that the winter is very long and the summer very short.

Roughly 200,000 acres was placed into "La Compagnie de New York" for which a constitution was duly signed by 41 subscribers on June 6, 1793. The group met soon thereafter, electing four commissioners to serve for a three-year term. These four appointed two American commissioners, Pierre Pharoux and Simon Desjardins, who were to prove the title, survey the land, and develop the infrastructure for the many colonists that were expected to follow.

I A copy of this prospectus — indeed, Streeter's copy — sold as lot 716 in the sale of the John J. Ford Reference Library, Part I, June 1, 2004.

Pharoux and Desjardins, together with the latter's brother, Geoffrey Desjardins, sailed for America the following month. The three kept a daily journal into which they made copious entries. What they found at "Castorland" was the antithesis of what was described in the prospectus: the land was located in a remote corner of New York State to which there were no roads or direct access by water; there was no local labor to assist in clearing the fields, deep snow covered everything for six months of the year, and the thaw, when it finally arrived, signaled the onslaught of hordes of black flies and mosquitoes. To make matters still worse, the survey accompanying the deed was inaccurate: instead of a rectangle with ample frontage on Lake Ontario at the western end, the course of the Black River, which formed the southern boundary, in actuality, meandered over the northern boundary, leaving upper Castorland cut off from the lower. Further, the state government at Albany was slow to grant title. As a crowning blow, a visit by Pharoux and Designations to the presumed francophile, Thomas Jefferson, failed to elicit any Federal support whatsoever.

These, then, were a few of the difficulties that the American commissioners encountered. Nonetheless, as the diaries witness, they persevered with vigor. After a brief visit before the onset of winter in 1793, the pair returned in 1794 and 1795. With such local help as could be recruited and with a few "colonists" sent over by the Compagnie, Pharoux and Desjardins cleared land, built cabins, and framed a mill. At the same time, they completed a survey and, with the true boundaries now apparent, commenced a lawsuit against William Constable, who sold the land to Pierre Chassanis in 1792. The seminal event of this period is the death of Pharoux, who drowned as he was rafting supplies down the river. Greatly saddened but duty-bound, Desjardins continued the effort in 1796. However, the commissioners in Paris lost patience with their American managers. First, they pressured Desjarding to return some of the money advanced for expenses (he had to sell some of his own land to fund this request) and then, in August, they sent over Rodolphe Tillier, a Swiss bureaucrat, to assume control of the entire project.

Desjardins' state of mind can only be imagined. He had toiled long hours at no pay; he had suffered great physical hardship; and he had

<sup>2</sup> The journal itself was purchased in 1862 in Paris by William Sumner Appleton. He presented it to the Massachusetts Historical Society. Dr. Franklin Hough translated the journal into English, but this translation has never been published.

lost his closest companion. Now, rather than receiving thanks, he was demoted without consultation. Fortunately, there is a letter — never before published — wherein the man vents his feelings with eloquence. The following was sent to Pierre Chassanis, the architect of Castorland and its largest investor, on August 5, 1796:

Duplicata. Fifteenth. Filed and numbered 64.

Castorland's High Fall, August 5, 1796

I have received from M. Tillier your letter and the deliberation of the Company concerning me. The present letter is addressed to you, not in your capacity of Director, but as an esteemed person in whom I do not hesitate to confide regarding my predicament. M. Riedain, your representative, has told me of his astonishment in finding that I was working for the Company without remuneration. He was told that I had 60,000 livres of revenue and that it was beneath my station to receive a salary. I do not know, my dear Director, who is so well informed as to my financial position, but this person is mistaken by a period of eight years, and even at that time this fortune belonged to both my brother and me. The first year of the Revolution alone took away 20,000 livres, money which we received in annuities and commissions from the Court; the second year we lost all our other seigneurial rights; then came the assignats which caused disadvantageous reimbursements and loss of funds so great that when I left we only had 20,000 livres left in land revenues. I have not received any of this revenue since I left, and you know that after taxes and compulsory loans there will be nothing left. The 60 shares I have purchased have not yielded any income either. All I had left to sustain myself here were funds from supplies I sold, and on which I have taken a large loss. With what was left of these funds I purchased a house in Albany. You, and M. de Chaumont, are aware that I was in charge of very lucrative grain negotiations. Minister Garat had agreed to pay in notes on London, as the exportation of currency was prohibited. I had no sooner arrived in New York than I received a further decree also prohibiting notes drawn on England, which in turn suspended payment of notes from France. My agreement was, therefore, annulled and, upon my arrival, I found I was unemployed and deprived of a commission which would have allowed me to live comfortably in New York. These agreements were the reason I had to request an honorary post, the limited extent of my services in New York not warranting a salary. However, during revolutions the ministry is subject to change; therefore I advised M. de Chaumont that this could happen, in which case, if I were to leave for Castorland, I would

need to be paid a salary. He told me: "Accept anyway and in a short while we can succeed in rectifying this." We had become friends, along with my colleague, during the crossing, as our tastes and character traits were similar in many respects. He suggested I take the lake trip, the cost of living in New York being beyond my means. We made the trip to Albany and I brought my household goods. During the trip on the lake I took charge of selecting, purchasing, and distributing the provisions. M. Pharoux then suggested I should accompany him to Philadelphia as I was more familiar with the English language, the legalities, and the bookkeeping than he, who had devoted himself entirely to the study of the arts. Being aware of my financial situation, he felt compelled to give my brother the position of secretary, a position he was well qualified for. He wrote to M. de Chaumont to this effect, but during the last two years, the only letter we have received from him is the one which M. Tillier gave me. In 1794 my friend, recognizing the necessity of having many people for such an undertaking, had my brother and me accompany him and, as we pointed out to you, we were spread over a 70-mile area. During the summer I travelled to New York to discuss the boundaries. In the autumn my friend and I thought we would die from the bloody flux. We were then abandoned by our men and the two of us were left alone.

Not wishing to die in that place we buried our money and dragged ourselves to Steuben, taking only our wallets. It took us three days to travel the 24 miles. My brother was at Long Falls, 45 miles further down, and we were as ignorant of his fate as he was of ours. He was the only one to avoid this illness. We spent the winter taking a second trip to Philadelphia to obtain funds from the hands of Mr. Coxe and to bring the paperwork up to date. You can imagine that during the summer in the wilderness we were constantly moving about or overseeing the workmen, and it was impossible to devote time to writing. Moreover, the mosquitoes plagued us and we had to be constantly surrounded by smoke. The year 1795 was also spent entirely in the service of the Company. I was unable to plan or transact any personal business. Lack of funds made it impossible for me to cultivate the land I had selected. Also, the loss of the only friend I had in this country of mercenary and egotistical people left me as sole manager and made it even less feasible for me to look after my personal business. I requested that you send a second commissioner, explaining to you that it was impossible for one man alone to oversee the work and operations taking place in various areas spread over a distance of 70 by 20 miles, especially because of the odd shape it was given by Mr. Constable, in spite of all the sound arguments presented to him both verbally and in writing. I also advised you of the

increase in price of everything in this country and I explained to you that the salaries set by you were too low. It is true, my dear Director, that I did not openly request a salary, as I felt loath to do that, and I would have been more flattered if this had been done without my having to ask.

Now my situation has become critical. Bales of linen and cambric worth 3,000 dollars, which Messrs. Olive and Seton have requested I send to New Orleans, are the only source of revenue I have left. The business in which I had invested, along with these gentlemen, did not turn out as expected and I will barely get 1,000 dollars out of it. Two of my relatives have arrived and I had to pay for their fare. I put one of them to work for the Company as I could not afford to keep him myself, although I had sent for him to assist me, as I need reliable people. It is absolutely impossible to rely on the people from the wilderness.

It has now become impossible for me to continue in the service of the Company without remuneration. Even though we are most careful, it is impossible for us to spend less than one thousand dollars per year in Albany. If I were to receive a salary of 600 dollars and my brother 400 dollars, our livelihood would be assured. I was never ambitious, but one must survive and especially try to stay out of debt.

I am very happy with the Company's choice in M. Tillier. He has made generous offers to me, but I told him that I could not accept anything which could be detrimental to him.

I beg you to reply to me in duplicate and triplicate as soon as you can concerning this matter. Send my letters to the address of citizen Hyacinthe de Longuemare, my friend, a merchant at Le Havre, who faithfully forwards them to me.

If I do not hear from you before the month of February, I will rent my house in Albany and leave with my family to go to Totten and Crossfield, near Lake George, where a worthy gentleman, who was also fond of my friend Pharoux, extends his hospitality to us and we, in turn, will try to be useful to him. This, my dear Director, is how matters stand; it is not a brilliant situation, but I have always known how to limit my needs. My books, and the hope of seeing our country peaceful and happy again, will keep me going.

If you, or M. de Chaumont, succeed in obtaining a salary for me from the Company I will gladly take charge of the lower Castorland, which I consider as the most suitable place for the formation of a French colony because of its attraction to Canadians. It is also a convenient spot for business because of its advantageous location on the bay, and its land is very fertile. I will again camp in a tent and wage war with the mosquitoes, and I will not rest until all the burning has been done and a space cleared around us.

During this time M. Tillier would carry on with the establishment of Castorville and take care of the tasks you have set out for him; all of which, though very useful to the upper country, cannot help the lower country because of lack of communication by water and the difficulties by land in an uninhabited region.

Let's proceed to your business. M. Riedain arrived without money and hired himself out to spend the winter with M. Boutin, who will settle between Castorville and Long Falls. If you want him to manage your property, you must send him funds this winter. Further to your letter, I have advised him to wait for the completion of the map before making a land selection. I hope it will be completed for next January. I will devote all my attention to it and will attempt to make up for the time we have lost. I intend to choose my own land in lower Castorland and I believe I can also select yours in advance. However, it would be wise not to make a final decision until we have seen all of it. Mr. Olive has taken the 4,050 acres which we sold to him from this area. The territory consists of approximately 60,000 acres. There are 30,000 acres of sub-divided land. Would it not be possible that five or six of us owners got together concerning this matter? I would be willing to take charge of the colonization, or sale, of each respective owner, and I believe that this operation would be to our mutual advantage.

Discuss this with M. de Chaumont and the people you feel would be most capable of forming and maintaining this colony and especially establishing businesses here. I have obtained specific information on this matter. I intended to go to the lake this fall and from there to Niagara and then on to Detroit. I was going to leave my brother to attend to the farming and I would have returned to Albany via Montreal. This trip would have been an education. I would have established the necessary relationships and correspondents in each area, in order to begin operating with a well-defined and predetermined goal. This would have been a very advantageous venture for the Company, or some of the partners, had they been interested. I intended to invest 500 dollars into this venture, but the suppression of my wages and the arrival of M. Tillier have upset my plan. I must stay with him to help him get started and that should take up most of the autumn.

I have learned, from M. Riedain, of your marriage to Mlle. de Chaumont. Pay my respects to her. She would find I have changed since I last had the pleasure of seeing her, as I have endured weariness, sorrow, and many discomforts in this country.

I see, from the handwriting, that Mlle. Chassanis is still your secretary. She had promised to come and see me at Castorville and, although she still has not kept her word, tell her that this has not affected my feelings towards her and I would be happy to secure a good parcel of land for her. Why did

you ask me to select only 450 acres per person? The squares consist of 450 acres, but there is no reason not to take 500. The 50-acre subdivisions have not yet been drawn, but they are shown and there is no reason why you should have to take an entire square. You can take, or leave, as many 50-acre subdivisions as you wish.

Goodbye, my dear Director. I wish you health and prosperity and request of you a prompt reply in order to dispel my doubts. Please accept my best regards.

I shall write you, as a Director, a long letter when I return from Albany. I have many things to tell you, as well as to our commissioners, and I will reply to the letters which M. Tillier brought to me.

P.S.: Albany, September 20. On August 7, Messrs. Boutin and Riedain took advantage of the trip undertaken by M. Tillier and my brother to visit the falls and Castorville. They were so impressed with the country that they made their choice as soon as they returned. M. Tillier chose land for M. de Chaumont at the mouth of Beaver River; M. Riedain chose the opposite side. I did not influence him in this decision, although I think that in order to choose a site it is necessary to be well informed and consequently to await the completion of the survey and the surveyor's report. M. Boutin chose his site near Long Falls. However, these new settlers have no money and were unable to remain in the camps where there was a risk of a delay in forming a colony, and also an advance of two or three hundred dollars was requested. They finally went to Fort Schuyler, where they will run a small store this winter. M. Tillier kept me here the whole mouth of August; therefore, not only was it impossible for me to travel to Niagara and Detroit, but it was also too late for me to make the trip to Kingston and Montreal and return here via Lake Champlain. This trip was absolutely necessary to establish the necessary contacts to obtain from Canada the men, beasts, and flour, the three commodities which are much cheaper than in this country. Going to the posts helps communication and adds a third to the value of our land. I have turned the notes which are due from Mr. Seton to M. Tillier; I passed them on to his order as agent for P. Chassanis. I also gave him the invoice for our supplies so that he may check Mr. Olive's account with regard to this. You have not received this account as the sale of the merchandise will only end next winter, after our statement of December 31. Consequently, these matters will be left outstanding until the end of the present year. Notwithstanding my situation, I will complete the work of my unfortunate friend and will spend the winter drawing up the map for the Company. Mr. Broadbent will stay at my house and I will watch over this task as carefully as is warranted.

However, I cannot continue giving my services ad honores. While awaiting a reply from the Company I will go to Lake George to find a friendly place to live. Should the Company grant the money I requested for me and my brother, I would ask (in order to avoid disputes between the commissioners) that the Company apply two thirds of the funds to the expenses of the upper country and one third to the lower country, or pick any other proportion it judges suitable. The Directors would then be able to compare the accounts of the two commissioners. They would be able to determine what each one accomplishes in proportion to the funds allocated. Whatever decision you reach, I still maintain that it will remain unleasible for one man to run a colony 70 miles long by 20 miles wide at its widest points. This fall the State has sold lots at six dollars an acre. If the Company were to follow this format, it could probably get the same price and would it not be better to sell the 100,000 acres that are undivided than to attempt to develop the same with insufficient funds? It seems to me that the profits would be more than satisfactory. [signed] S. Desjardins

One wonders why Desjardins, a wealthy aristocrat, volunteered to represent the Compagnie in America. Perhaps he feared the Terror and, for certain, he had no idea of the rigors that lay ahead. No doubt, a more forceful personality would have fared better but, as matters turned out, the eminently practical Tillier lasted only two years. He was fired by Chassanis in 1798, following which there was a protracted lawsuit between the parties. In 1814, at the end of its stipulated life of 21 years, the Compagnie was liquidated for its accumulated debts.

In retrospect, Castorland was a fantasy that could not possibly have been realized. Under the best of circumstances, pioneers need to own their homesteads, whereas the *Compagnie* was staffed with any available hirelings who, in turn, were paid by fools residing three thousand miles away. Out of this farce comes a truly tragic figure: Simon Desjardins. He gave his time, his fortune, and ultimately his health to a cause that was destined to fail. The pathos to be felt in his letter to Pierre Chassanis makes a fitting counterpoint to the stately goddess depicted on the Castorland jeton: a classical goddess contrasted to a ruined man.

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Figure 1. Castorland jeton (courtesy of Rochester Numismatic Association; ex Benjamin Duvivier).

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The Reverend Chandler Robbins herein gives a summary of the contents of the Castorland Journal.

#### **APPENDIX**

The following is the original text of the letter from Desjardins to Chassanis; for those who read French, it offers the full force of Desjardins' eloquent plaint better than any translation can. Spelling, punctuation, and accentuation have been left as in the original.

[in upper left corner] quinzieme cotte soixante quatre

Duplicata

Castorland's high fall, 5.8.1796.

J'ai reçu par M. Tillier, mon cher Directeur, votre lettre et la deliberation de la comp. a mon égard. Cette lettre-ci est pour Vous, non comme Directeur, mais comme un homme estimable, au quel je ne fais point difficulté de confier ma situation. M. Riedain, votre fondé de pouvoir m'a rapporté que, sur ce qu'il avait marqué son étonnement de ce que je travaillais pour la compagnie sans retribution, on lui répondit que j'avais 60,000. de rente, et que j'étais audessus d'un traitement. Je ne sais, mon cher Directeur, qui a pu si bien être instruit de l'etat de ma fortune: mais cette personne s'est trompée de 8 ans de date, et encore cette fortune était elle entre mon frère et moy. La première année de la révolution nous a seule enlevé 20,000.11 que nous avions en charges et pensions de la cour. La seconde nous a ôté tous nos droits seigneuriaux; la suite a amené les assignats qui nous ont occasionné des remboursemens désavantageux et dispertes de fonds &c &c en sorte que, lors de mon départ, il ne nous restait que 20,000. lt de rente enterre. De ce revenu je n'ai rien touché depuis mon absence, et vous savez que les impots et emprunts forcés n'en laissent guères. Les 60. actions, que i'ai acquises, ne me rapportent pas plus que le rente. Il ne m'est donc resté pour me soutenir ici, qu'un fond de marchandises, sur lequel j'ai beaucoup perdu, et du produit du restant, j'ai achête une maison à Albany. Vous et M. de Chaumont savez que j'etais chargé d'une négociation en grains trèslucrative. Le Ministre Garat était convenu de payer en traites sur Londres, l'exportation du numéraire étant prohibée. A peine arrivé a New York, j'y reçus le décret postérieur, qui prohibait aussi les traites sur l'Angleterre, et le bill du Parlement d'Angleterre, qui suspendait de son côté le payement des traites tirées de France. Mon marché je trouva donc annullé de fait et je me trouvai, dès mon arrivée, sans occupation, et privé d'une commission, qui m'aurait, par son produit, mis à même de vivre agréablement à New York. Ce furent ces engagemens qui me firent borner à vous demander une place d'honoraire, mes légers services à New York ne pouvant exiger un traitement. Cependant comme dans les révolutions, le ministère est sujet à changer, je previns M. de Chaumont que cela pourrait avoir lieu,

et que dans ce cas, allant à Castorland, j'aurais besoin d'un traitement. Il me dit: « acceptez toujours, et dans quelque tems nous pourrons réussir à cet égard ». Nous nous étions liés d'amitié avec mon collegue pendant la traverse nos gouts et nos caractères sympathisaient presqu'en tout. Il me proposa de faire le voyage du lac. La vie de New York étant audessus de mes-facultés, nous fimes en conséquence, tous ensemble, celui d'Albany, ou je transportai mes pénates. Dans le voyage du Lac, je me chargeai de la rédaction et de la partie des approvisionnemens et distributions. De retour M. Pharoux me proposa de l'accompagner à Philadelphie étant un peu plus avancé dans l'anglais, et plus au fait de la partie contentieuse et de la comptabilité que lui, qui s'etait entierement livré aux arts: Connaissant ma situation gênée, il avait cru devoir donner la place de secretaire à mon frère, qui d'ailleurs était bien en état de la remplir. Il écrivit même à ce sujet à M. de Chaumont; mais depuis 2. ans, nous n'avons reçu de lettre de luy que celle que M. Tillier m'a apportée. En 1794, mon ami voyant la necéssité d'être plusiers pour une pareille entreprise, se fit accompagner de moi et de mon frère; et, comme nous vous le marquâmes, nous étions dispersés sur une étenduë de 70. m. de longuer. Je fis, l'été, le voyage de New York pour la discussion des limites. L'automne, je pensai, ainsi que mon ami, péru du flux de sang. Nous fumes successivement abandonnés de nos hommes, et réduits à nous deux.

Ne voulant pas mourir sur la place, nous enterrames notre argent, et nous nous trainâmes avec nos portefeuilles, à Stuben. Nous mîmes 3. jours à faire les 24. milles. Mon frère était aux longues chûtes, 45. m. plus bas. Nous ignorions son sort comme lui ignorait le nôtre. Il fut le seul qui échappa à cette maladie. Nous employames l'hiver, à un second voyage à Philadelphie pour tirer nos fonds des mains de M. Coxe et mettu au courant les écritures; car vous penser bien que l'été, dans les bois, toujours en voyage, ou après les ouvriers, il est impossible de s'occuper. J'écritures d'ailleurs les moustiques, brulots & ne vous le permettraient pas impunément, quand vous seriez même entouré de fumée. L'année 1795 fut employée de même entierement au service de la compagnie. Je n'ai fait ni pu entreprendre aucune affaire particuliere. Le défaut de fonds m'empêcha de rien faire sur les terres que je pouvais choisir; et la perte du seul ami que j'avait dans ce pays d'ames vénales égoïstes me rendant gérent, je me trouvai encore moins en état de m'occuper d'affaires particulières.

Je vous demandai l'envoi d'un second commissaire, vous faisant connaître comment il était impossible qu'un seul homme dirigeat des travaux et des opérations sur plusieurs points dans terrein qui a 70. m. d'étenduë, et 20. m. de profondeur par la singuliere configuration qu'il a plu a M. Constable

de lui donner, malgré toutes nos bonnes raisons verbales et représentations pas écrit je vous instruisais en meme tems du prix énorme ou tout est monté dans ce pays, et je vous représentais que les appointemens, que vous aviez fixés, etaient trop modiques. Enfin mon cher Directeur, il est vrai que je ne sollicitais pas ouvertement des appointemens. D'une part j'avais de la répugnance à en faire la demande; et de l'autre j'aurais été plus flatté qu'on me les eut accordés, sans que j'eusse été obliger de les demander postuler.

A présent ma situation est devenuë plus critique. Une balle de linons et batistes valant 3,000 piastres laquelle M. Olive et Seton m'engagerant d'envoyer à la Nouvelle-Orleans, formait la reste de mes rentrées. La maison, à laquelle je m'étais confiés, ainsi que ces MM. a mal tourné, de sorte peine en tirerai-je mille piastres. Deux parens me sont arrivés, dont j'ai été obligé de payer le passage. J'en ai placé un au service de la Compagnie, n'étant pas à même de le soutenir. J'avais fait venir ci pour me seconder, ayant besoin de personnes sûres, puisqu'on ne peut absolument se fier aux gens des bois.

Il m'est actuellement impossible de continuer à rendre mes services à la Compagnie sans appointmens. Avec la plus stricte économie, nous ne pouvons dépenser moins de mille piastres a Albany, chaque année. Si j'avais 600 piastres de traitement et si mon frere avait 400 piastres notre subsistence serait assurée. Je n'ai jamais eu d'ambition; mais enfin il faut vivre, et surtout ne point contracter de dettes.

Je suis très satisfait du choix que la Compagnie a fait de M. Tillier. Il m'a fait des offres généreuses; mais je lui ai répondu que je ne voulais rien, qui fut à son détriment.

Je vous prie de me répondre par duplicata et triplicata le plustot possible à cet égard. Envoyez mes lettres à l'adresse du citoyen Hyacinthe de Longuemare, mon ami, négociant au Havre. Il me les fait passer très-exactement.

Si je n'ai pas de vos nouvelles avant le mois de février, je compte louer ma maison d'Albany et me retirer avec ma famille dans Totten & Crosfield, près le lac George, ou un homme respectable, qui chérissait aussi mon ami Pharoux, nous offre l'hospitalité, et ou nous tâcherons de lui être utile. Voila, mon cher Directeur, ma situation; Elle n'est pas brillante: mais j'ai toujours sçu borner mes besoins. Mes livres et lespérance de revoir notre patrie heureuse et tranquille me soutiendront.

Si vous, et M. de Chaumont, parvenu à m'obtenir un traitement de la Compagnie, je me chargerai volontiers de l'établissement du bas Castorland, que je regarde comme la partie la plus convenable, tant pour y former un établissement français par la facilité d'y attirer des Canadiens, que pour

le commerce par sa situation avantageuse sur la baie et la fertilité du sol. Je recommencerai à camper sous la tente et à faire la guerre aux moustiques, qui sont redoutables et ne laissent pas de repos jusqu'a ce qu'on ait brulé et defriché un espace autour de soi.

M. Tillier pendant ce tems ferait l'établissement de Castorville et des objets dont vous l'avez chargé, les quels très utiles pour la partie supérieure ne peuvent l'être à l'inférieure, par le défaut de communication par eau et les difficultés de celles par terre dans un pays inhabité.

Venons actuellement à vos affaires. M. Riedain, se trouvant sans fonds à son arrivée, s'est engagé pour passer l'hiver avec M. Boutin, qui va s'établir entre Castorville et les longues chûtes. Si vous lui confiez l'administration de votre propriété, il faut lui faire passer des fonds cet hiver. D'après votre lettre, je lui ai conseillé d'attendre la confection de la carte pour faire son choix. J'espère qu'elle sera finie pour janvier prochain; j'y donnerai tous mes soins et tâcherai de suppléer autant qu'il sera en mon pouvoir à la perte que nous avons faite. Je compte fixer mon choix dans le bas Castorland et je crois pouvoir d'avance y indiquer le vôtre; mais il est plus prudent de ne se décider qu'a près avoir tout vû. M. Olive a pris dans cette partie les 4,050. acres que nous lui avons venduës. Cette partie forme 60,000. acres environ: C'est 30,000. acres pour la partie divise. Ne pourrions-nous pas entre 5 ou 6. propriétaires divis nous réunir pour cet objet. Dans ce cas je me chargerais volontiers de diriger les établissemens ou les ventes des particuliers possesseurs de cette partie, et je crois que l'opération nous serait mutuellement avantageuse.

Parlez de cela avec M. de Chaumont et les personnes que vous croyez capables de former et de soutenir cet établissement et surtout d'y en ériger un de commerce. Je me suis occupé particulierement des renseignemens sur cette partie. Je comptais aller cet automne au lac, de là à Niagara et jusqu'au Détroit. Je devais laisser mon frère finir la campagne et je fusse revenu à Albany par Montréal. Ce voyage m'aurait instruit par mi même. J'aurais établi les rélations et correspond. necessaires dans chaque endroit a fin de pouvoir commencer les opérations avec un but connu et décidé. Et si la compagnie ou une partie des associés eut voulu se former à cet effet, Ils en aurait tiré de grands avantages. Je comptais employer à cet objet 500 piastres du mien; mais la suppression de mon traitement et l'arrivée de M. Tillier ont dérangé mon plan. Je ne puis le quitter que je ne l'aie mis au fait et cela tiendra tout mon automne.

J'ai appris par M. Riedain votre mariage avec Mad. le de Chaumont. Présentez lui mon hommage respectueux; elle me trouverait un peu changé depuis le tems que j'eus le plaisir de la voir; mais j'ai essuyé dans ce pays, bien des fatigues, des chagrins et des contrariétés.

M. lle Chassanis est toujours votre secretaire, à ceque j'ai vu par des copies de sa main. Elle m'avait promis de venir me voir à Castorland. Malgré qu'elle ne m'ait pas encore tenu parole, dites lui que je ne lui en suis pas moins attaché et que je m'estimerai heureux de lui procurer un bon lot.

Pourquoi n'avez-vous fait choisir que 450. acres par tête. Les carreaux sont de 450. acres; mais rien n'empêche de choisir 500. Les subdivisions de 50. acres étant non tirées, mais toutes indiquées, rien ne vous astreint à prendre un carreau entier. Vous pouvez y prendre ou y laisser autant de subdivisions de 50. acres que vous le desirez.

Adieu, mon cher Directeur, Santé et prospérité; et, je vous en prie, promte réponse pour me tirer de l'incertitude ou je suis. Soyez persuadé de tous mes sentimens

À mon retour à Albany je vous écrirai une longue lettre, comme Directeur. J'ai bien des choses a vous dire, ainsy qu'a nos commissaires. Et je repondrai aux lettres que M. Tillier m'a apportées.

P.S. Albany. 20.9. Le 7.8. M. Boutin et Riedain profiterent de l'occasion du voyage que firent M. Tillier & mon frère pour visiter les chûtes & Castorville. Ils revinrent si contens du païs qu'ils fixerent leur choix à leur retour. M. Tillier ayant fait le choix pour M. de Chaumont à l'embouchure du Beaver river, M. Riedain par l'autre côté; au moyen de quoi je n'ai eu rien influé sur son détermination, quoique je pense toujours que, pour choisir il faut connaître et en conséquence attendre le complément & le rapport de l'arpentage. M. Boutin a fait son choix auprès des longues chûtes; mais ces nouveaux Colons étant sans fonds n'ont pu rester dans les bois, ce qui, outre les dangers d'un établissement reculé, exigerit une avance de 2 ou 3 cent piastres; enfin ils se sont retirés au fort Schuyler ou ils vont tenir un petit magasin cet hiver. M. Tillier m'a retenu tous les mois d'8. de sorte que je n'ai pu non seulement faire le voyage de Niagara & du Détroit, mais même qu'il était trop tard pour entreprendre celui de Kingston & de Montréal en revenant ici par le lac Champlain, voyage indispensable pour établir les correspondances necessaires à l'effet de tirer du Canada les hommes, les bestiaux et les farines, trois choses qui y sont bien audessous du prix de ce pays. La reddition des postes facilite singulierement cette communication et ajoute un tiers à la valeur de nos terres. J'ai remis à M. Tiller les billets à écheoir de M. Seton: je les ai passés à son ordre comme l'ayent de P. Chassanis. Je lui ai remis aussi la facture de nos marchandises afin qu'il vérifie la facture de nos marchandises le compte de M. Olive à cet égard. Vous n'avez pas reçu ce compte attendu qui la vente des marchandises ne se termina que l'hiver d.er après notre compte du 31.X. En conséquence cet objet restait à reglu définitivement à la fin de la présente année - malgré la circonstance asserée ou je me trouve, je terminerai l'ouvrage de mon malheureux ami

et j'employerai cet hiver à la rédaction de la carte de la C.ie M. Brodhead logera chez moi et je suivrai ce travail avec tout le soin qu'il mérite; mais je ne puis continuer plus longtems mes services ad honores. Dans l'incertitude de la réponse de la comp.º je vais faire le voyage du lac George pour m'assurer une retraite auprès de l'amitié. Au cas ou la C.ie m'accorderait le traitement que je demande pour moi & mon frère, je desirerais, pour éviter toute difficulté entre les commissaires que la Société décidat que, sur les fonds, il y en aurait, je suppose 2/3 pour les dépenses du haut et 1/3 pour celles du bas, ou telle autre proportion qu'Elle jugerait la plus convenable alors la Direction aura un objet de comparaison dans les comptes des 2. commiss.res Elle pourra juger de cequi chacun aura fait en proportion des moyens qui lui auront été confiés. Telle décision que Vous premiez, il sera toujours impossible à un seul homme, comme je vous l'ai toujours marqué, de diriger un établissement, qui a par sa forme 70. m. de long sur 20. m. de large, dans ses points les plus étendus. Les terres que l'Etat vient de vendre cet automne ont été à 6. piastres l'acre l'une dans l'autre. Si la C. ie suivait les memes formes, elle trouverait probablement le meme prix et ne vaudrait il pas mieux vendre ainsi les 100,000 acres indivises que d'entreprendre de les établir avec des moyens ensuffisants. Il me semble que le bénéfice est assez grand pour satisfaire. S. Desjardins

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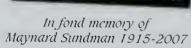
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## One Hundred Greatest Works of United States Numismatic Literature: A Survey

compiled by Leonard Augsburger

As discussed at the NBS general meeting at the 2007 ANA Convention in Milwaukee, we are conducting a membership survey to identify the hundred greatest works of United States numismatic literature. Our goal is to form a collective appraisal of the most important United States literature and to suggest a new collecting framework for experienced and novice bibliophiles alike.

As a first step, the NBS Board has identified a candidate list of several hundred items, which is found below. We invite readers to suggest additional candidates; these will be reviewed and a ballot will be sent to the NBS membership for voting.

We purposefully leave the definition of "greatest" open to each individual member. This may be the most scholarly, most influential, most ubiquitous, or even most notorious. This is your survey and will reflect the overall opinion of the NBS membership. Results will appear in a future issue of *The Asylum*. Additionally, an offprint may be prepared illustrating the One Hundred Greatest works, along with additional commentary, and future surveys may similarly cover other numismatic arenas. Please forward comments and suggestions on this candidate list to Len Augsburger, NBS Board member, at leonard\_augsburger@ hotmail.com.

Adams, Edgar H. (1911) Private Gold Coinage of California, 1849-1855

Adams, Edgar H. & William H. Woodin (1913) United States Pattern, Trial and Experimental Pieces

Adams, John W. & Anne E. Bentley (2007) Comitia Americana and Related Medals

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American Numismatic Society (1914) Exhibition of United States and Colonial Coins, 1914

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Appleton, William Sumner (1870) Description of a Selection of Coins and Medals Relating to America, exhibited to the Massachusettes Historical Society

Appleton, William Sumner (1873) Description of Medals of Washington in the Collection of W.S. Appleton

Baker, William S. (1885) Medallic Portraits of Washington

Barton, William (1813) Memoirs of the Life of David Rittenhouse

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S.H. Chapman (1924) Alvord
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S. H. & H. Chapman (1879) S. H. & H. Chapman

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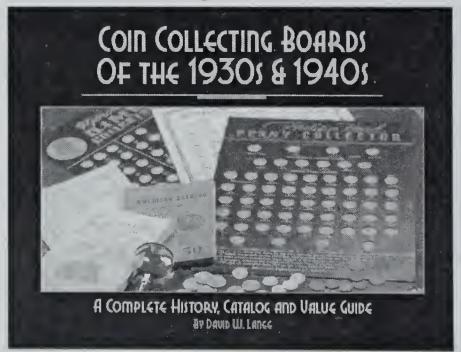
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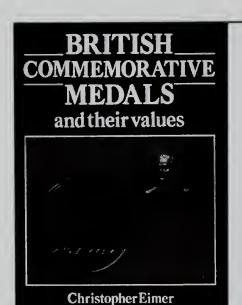


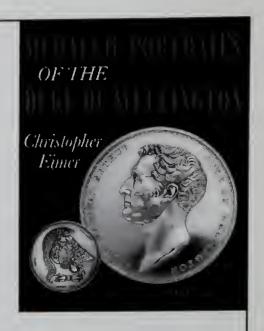


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